

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 MMO-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8444

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO

DMA IAGS HQS CZ

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, NU

SUBJECT: PROPOSED IAGS REDUCTIONS

TO ASST. SECRETARY ROGERS FROM CHARGE

1. I WISH TO EXPRESS MY CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON NICARAGUA OF THE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS IN THE INTER-AMERICAN GEODETIC SURVEY (IAGS) PROGRAM. MY CONCERN DERIVES PRIMARILY FROM MY PERSONAL OBSERVATION OF THE SCARCITY OF RELIABLE INFORMATION ABOUT NICARAGUA, PARTICULARLY IN AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO US. SPECIFICALLY, THE REDUCTION OF PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE IAGS PROGRAM HERE WOULD REDUCE THE FLOW OF INFORMATION THAT IS ESSENTIAL FOR MISSION ANALYSIS AND PROGRAMS.

2. THE IAGS MISSION HAS MADE AN INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF NICARAGUA WHICH IS HANDICAPPED OTHERWISE BY THE LACK OF STATISTICS AND PUBLIC RECORDS, INEFFICIENT PUBLIC
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ADMINISTRATION, POOR COMMUNICATIONS AND A WEAK RESEARCH EFFORT.

AS A RESULT OF IAGS ASSISTANCE TO THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE (IGN), THE INSTITUTE IS NOW CAPABLE OF PERFORMING ALL ASPECTS OF MAP PRODUCTION, INCLUDING AIR AND SEA CHARTS AND THEIR PRODUCT IS IMPORTANT TO VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE US MISSION. FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE JUST EMBARKED UPON AN IMAGINATIVE NEW CONCEPT IN ASSISTANCE TO THE RURAL POOR FOLLOWING THE MANDATE OF THE US CONGRESS TO ENGAGE IN AID PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO HELP THE LEAST FAVORED SECTORS OF SOCIETY. UNFORTUNATELY, THE CAMPESIONOS WHO ARE THE TARGETS OF THIS PROGRAM LIVE IN AREAS WHICH ARE CHARTED POORLY OR NOT AT ALL. GOOD MAPS, AVAILABLE ONLY THROUGH A STRONG CARTOGRAPHIC PROGRAM, ARE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM. IN FACT, MAPS HAVE ALREADY PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM, AND TO CUT BACK IAGS JUST WHEN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION IS BEGINNING COULD WELL PROVE A CONSIDERABLE HANDICAP.

3. ANOTHER IMPORTANT USE OF MAPS IS IN OUR CONTINUING ASSESSMENT OF GUERRILLA ACTIVITY. MOST OF THIS ACTIVITY TAKES PLACE IN THE AREA WHERE OUR GEOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE IS THE WEAKEST AND THE HIGH QUALITY MAPS PRODUCED ARE VERY MUCH NEEDED BY US. IT ALSO WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF THE LACK OF GOOD CARTOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE WERE TO HINDER UNDULY GON EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM.

4. WE ALSO FEAR THAT THE AID SEISMOLOGICAL STUDY, STATE DEPARTMENT MAP PROCUREMENT AND THE TIDE-GUAGE PROGRAM WOULD BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY A SEVERE ATTENUATION OF THE IAGS.

5. ALTHOUGH THE IAGS WORKS THROUGH ITS LOCAL COUNTERPART, THE NICARAGUAN GEOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE (IGN), IN SECURING MAPS, THE IAGS EFFORT, INCLUDING THE PRESENCE OF AN IAGS REPRESENTATIVE PERMANENTLY STATIONED HERE IS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE PROGRAM. WE ARE NOT AT ALL SANGUINE THAT THE IGN WOULD CONTINUE TO PERFORM AT ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS IF THE IAGS PRESENCE WERE REMOVED. AT THE SAME TIME, THE IAGS PROVIDES THE SOURCE OF TRAINING FOR NICARAGUAN CARTOGRAPHERS AT ITS CARTOGRAPHIC SCHOOL IN THE CANAL ZONE. AS IN MOST LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES THE LOSS OF SUCH SKILLED PERSONNEL TO PRIVATE INDUSTRY IS HIGH AND THE INABILITY OF A REDUCED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CARTOGRAPHIC SCHOOL TO PROVIDE A FLOW OF REPLACEMENTS WOULD SERIOUSLY HAMPER THE PROGRAM HERE AS WELL AS IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

6. IT SEEMS PARTICULAR UNJUSTIFIABLE TO PROPOSE CUTS AS A COST-CUTTING MOVE WHEN INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO ME INDICATES THAT THE PROGRAM OVERALL IS MORE THAN PAYING ITS WAY. IN NICARAGUA, THE RETURN IN FY 1974 WAS \$3.34 FOR EACH DOLLAR SPENT. THE RETURN DROPPED TO ONLY \$1.20 IN FY 1975, BUT WILL

RISE AGAIN IN FY 1976, POSSIBLE TO HIGH AS \$2.50. THESE FIGURES HAVE BEEN OBTAINED BY COMPARING THE PROGRAM COSTS (\$41,000 FOR IAGS REPRESENTATIVE AND OTHER EXPENSES IN-COUNTRY PLUS \$55,000 ATTRIBUTED AS NICARAGUAN PROGRAM'S SHARE OF CANAL ZONE COSTS) TO THE VALUE OF THE MAPS OBTAINED. THE FIGURES PROVIDED ME FOR THE OVERALL COST OF THE SEVENTEEN NATION PROGRAM PLUS SUPPORT COSTS IN THE CANAL ZONE SHOW A RETURN OF \$4.65 IN FY 1974 AND \$4.54 IN FY 1975. IF THIS IS CORRECT, THE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS WOULD SEEM TO MAKE NO ECONOMIC SENSE AND WOULD, IN FACT, BE "PENNY-WISE, POUND FOOLISH."

7. AS THESE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS WILL AFFECT SIXTEEN OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL AS NICARAGUA, IT MIGHT BE WELL TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT AT THE CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE. AMBASSADOR THEBERGE CONCURS IN THESE VIEWS. WARNER

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